

# ACT Plans for "The Gondoliers"

By Brodie MacRAE

At 8 o'clock on February 20th, something will happen to PEI that hasn't happened since – August. Gilbert & Sullivan are once again rearing their ghostly, British heads in order to amuse musical-comedy hungry Island audiences as ACT (A Community Theatre) prepares to grace the Confederation mainstage with G&S's *The Gondoliers*.

This is the fifth Gilbert and Sullivan collaboration performed by ACT in only six years, having previously produced *HMS Pinafore*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *The Mikado*, and *Trial by Jury*.

While *The Gondoliers* has been overshadowed historically by the first three mentioned productions, it is nonetheless considered by many to be a superb work. It was one of the last Gilbert and Sullivan collaborations before the pair went their separate ways, and is often performed all around the globe. It contains many fine musical numbers, plenty of opportunity for dance numbers and a predictably topsy turvy comedic plot, as in all good G&S's.

The story in a nutshell: two republican gondola-boatmen and two lovely maidens marry. In an unexpected turn of events, it is revealed that one of the boatmen is actually the



## If you squint you can see Gilbert and Sullivan boxing

King of Barataria. The King was married as an infant to the daughter of an impoverished Spanish duke and this duke is now looking to move up in the world through his daughter's privileged position.

This presents a number of problems. No one knows which republican boatman is the King (it wouldn't be a Gilbert and Sullivan if it were that simple). Since they both just got married, one of them now has two wives, and to top it off, the ideals of a republican oppose those of a monarchist, so neither of them even wants to be a king.

Until the mess is sorted out, they both take the job, comedy ensues and everyone dances and sings a whole lot.

Set in the Mediterranean in the 18th-century, it will be nice to see people outside dancing and having fun without winter coats and having to shovel through a foot and a half of snow first.

*The Gondoliers* is directed by Terry Pratt, musical direction by Carl Mathis and choreography by Julia Sauvé. There is a full orchestra of semi-professional musicians and a cast of over 40 talented Islanders, with more than a few UPEI students

comers to the scene. ACT is presenting this production having established themselves over the past ten years as a formidable non-profit theatre organization. Along with Theatre PEI, ACT generates the vast majority of "off-season" theatrical activity in Charlottetown and beyond.

*The Gondoliers* plays at 8 o'clock in the evening at Confederation Centre (mainstage) on Thursday, Friday and Saturday, February 20-22nd and at Summerside's Harbourfront Jubilee Theatre the following Friday and Saturday, February 28th and March 1st

Tickets – for reserved seating – are \$16 and \$14 (senior, student, child, unwaged). Confederation Centre Box Office 566-1267

Harbourfront Jubilee Box Office 888-2500

For further information: Rob Thomson 892-3288



involved.

There will be many familiar faces in the cast, as well as a few new-



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